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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 002878

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SUBJECT: GOR NOT INTERESTED IN "TAKING THE NRC FORWARD"

REF: STATE 118921

Classified By: Political M/C Susan M. Elliott for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The MFA European Cooperation Desk told us the GOR remains interested in improving the NATO-Russia Council, but believes strategic-level agreement should precede reform of NRC structures, hence Russia's decision to disengage from the "Taking the NATO-Russia Council Forward" paper. The GOR wants a document of historic importance (analogous to the Founding Act or Rome Declaration) that would include a Russia-NATO non-aggression statement. Regarding the reform document, the GOR complained the proposed changes would downgrade certain working groups, thereby compounding the NRC's inefficiency. The GOR would also like to set up an Afghanistan working group within the NRC. This is not likely the last word from Moscow on NRC; once the political level focuses on the December Ministerial, there may yet be a scramble to salvage something demonstrating forward progress. End summary.

GOR Not Interested In "Taking the NRC Forward"

12. (C) On November 19 MFA European Cooperation Deputy Director Yuriy Gorlach told us the GOR still favors reform of NRC structures, but would like a strategic-level political declaration to reorient the relationship, either at the upcoming December 4 Ministerial meeting or at the presidential level. His instructions, he said, are to generate a document as epoch making as the Founding Act or the Rome Declaration. The centerpiece, according to Gorlach, would be a "legally binding" statement of non-aggression and non-use of force between NATO and Russia. Russia, therefore, was in fact backing away from the "Taking the NRC Forward" paper, which was to have been completed by the Ministerial. He said Russia instead proposed the deliverables for December 4 Ministerial to be the NRC work plan and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization (NAMS) agreement to sell parts and equipment to NATO.

13. (C) Gorlach said the GOR was not in a hurry to reform the NRC. "We want good reform," he said. He added that the GOR was concerned about the value-added of the "Taking the NRC Forward" paper, and said there was a risk that the political and technical parts of the document "might not coincide." He also complained that the NRC work plan contained many ideas that "did not interest" the GOR. He added that when Russia proposed ideas, some NATO members opposed them.

GOR Complains of Inefficiency

¶4. (C) Gorlach said that some NATO members proposed larger groups to work on NRC issues that appeared to be the same as the already-existing committees. Creating more layers of bureaucracy would not increase the effectiveness of the NRC, he said.

¶5. (C) Gorlach added that Russia sent many experts to NRC Meetings and relegating some topics to sub-committee status shows disrespect for the time and efforts of these high-ranking experts. For example, the GOR usually sent terrorism specialists from the Federal Security Service (FSB) and Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) to meetings related to Afghanistan. Not all NATO members did this, however, and so it was not productive for the U.S. and Russia to engage with unqualified interlocutors from other NATO countries. He added that when some NATO members sent qualified experts to meetings, they lacked the proper security clearance to engage in discussions.

NATO and Russia Should Discuss EST, Strengthen Ties

¶6. (C) Gorlach posited that the GOR would like to discuss Medvedev's proposed European Security Treaty within the framework of the NRC. "The NRC is strong enough to discuss broad security issues, including incident prevention," he

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said. He pointed out that NATO and Russia sometimes have forces stationed close to each other. Both sides would like to prevent an accidental clash, he said, and so dialogue must increase. Gorlach also reiterated Russia's commitment to the Joint Review of 21st Century Security Challenges.

Cooperation On Afghanistan

¶7. (C) Gorlach opined that Russia's contributions to Afghanistan stabilization, including the Afghanistan Air Transit Agreement, Volga-Dnieper airlift, and counternarcotics efforts, were greater than the contributions of many NATO members. He said the GOR proposed an Afghanistan working group in the NRC, which could include many experts and be the main NRC vehicle for promoting Afghan stabilization. "Such a group would create good synergy," he stated.
Beyrle